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of Food
and Agriculture

Division of Family & Consumer Sciences 2015 Year in Review Report

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Message from the Director

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Dear Colleagues:

I am honored to present the [NIFA](#) Division of Family & Consumer Sciences (DFCS) 2015 Year in Review Report. Here you will find information and highlights on a variety of DFCS programs, partnerships, and opportunities to advance the critical work we do together.



NIFA invests in and advances agricultural research, education, and extension to solve societal challenges. As a part of the NIFA Institute of Youth, Family, and Community, DFCS supports and enhances this mission in a variety of critical ways.

As the population grows and diversifies, our quality of life increasingly depends on family well-being and community vitality as a shared priority for all Americans. DFCS programs strengthen families, farms, communities, and the economy by focusing on the human and community dimensions of food and agriculture. We address priority issues through scientific research and its application; strategic partnerships; extension education; and preparing the next generation of Family & Consumer Sciences professionals.

One of the finest examples of advancing our work stems from our participation in the [Family & Consumer Sciences Alliance](#), which enhances the visibility and viability of our work to improve quality of life for individuals, families, and communities in a diverse and global society

These are busy and exciting times, and we look forward to continuing our work with you toward a future where communities thrive and families achieve optimal well-being through informed decisions and healthy, sustainable lifestyles.

Best regards-

Caroline

Caroline E. Crocoll, Ph.D., CFCS
Director-Division of Family & Consumer Sciences



New Program Structure for DFCS

During FY 2015, DFCS restructured to focus on two broad thematic areas:

FAMILY WELL-BEING— Team Leader: [Beverly Samuel](#)

Why is family well-being important to a thriving society? Families who live in an environment where they can make informed decisions, manage basic needs, and tackle pressing challenges are more equipped to lead healthier lives. A range of health and socioeconomic factors can affect family well-being. Investments in families contribute significantly to the social and economic development of our nation. People benefit from gaining knowledge and learning skills in a range of areas that affect family life. DFCS supports programs that help families improve their well-being by increasing knowledge and skills that:

- Promote sound parenting
- Build financial resources
- Support compassionate care for every generation
- Balance emotional health
- Foster healthy relationships
- Facilitate healthy dietary practices
- Improve residential environments

NIFA Priorities in Family Well-Being

In partnership with the land-grant universities, DFCS supports efforts in research, education, and extension that empower families to achieve optimal well-being. Family & Consumer Sciences programs focus on:

- Child and Family Development
- Financial Capability
- Health and Wellness
- Housing and Environmental Health

COMMUNITY VITALITY— Team Leader: [Brent Elrod](#)

What differentiates a thriving community from one that struggles? Land-grant universities and community and economic development extension specialists seek to answer this question through sound science and education. Faculty and educators explore key community and economic development interests such as leadership, workforce development, entrepreneurship, civic engagement/volunteerism, community planning, and disaster preparedness, and then share evidence-based practices that help build upon existing strengths, and responds to community concerns.

Strong communities create a more stable and supportive society, and residents report that they lead happier and healthier lives. Living in well-functioning communities generates opportunities and benefits such as:

- Growth of local economies and businesses
- More affordable and energy-efficient housing
- Programs to increase rural vitality and farm sustainability
- More efficient use of public and private resources

NIFA Priorities in Community Vitality

NIFA's Community Vitality portfolio focuses on the socio-economic potential of rural/urban interdependence and addressing the critical needs of people and places through:

- Workforce Development
- Community Resource and Economic Development
- Rural Health and Safety
- Urban Extension

DFCS Collaboration Highlights

White House Council on Indoor Air Quality

DFCS staff participated in a multi-agency approach in development of the [Federal Radon Action Plan](#). We expanded this initiative to include non-government organizations and it is now the National Radon Action Plan. **Point of Contact:** [Beverly Samuel](#)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Caregiver Workgroup

DFCS staff supported the CMS Caregiver Workgroup, along with various agencies and organizations that share their resources and programs to serve caregivers. **Point of Contact:** [Sylvia Montgomery](#)

GrandFamilies Advisory Group

The GrandFamilies Advisory Group includes various agencies and organizations that discuss issues concerning grandparents raising children. DFCS staff helped address needs, concerns, and issues to raise awareness on behalf of the families. **Point of Contact:** [Sylvia Montgomery](#)

Let's Move! Child Care Federal Partner Team

Let's Move! Child Care (LMCC) seeks to increase the number of child early care and education providers who meet obesity prevention best practices in five goal areas: (1) increased physical activity; (2) reduced screen time; (3) improved food choices; (4) promoted healthier beverages; and (5) supported infant feeding. DFCS worked with the LMCC Federal Partner team, in collaboration with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to develop meaningful partnerships with the Cooperative Extension System to embed LMCC concepts into both extension and the early care and education workforce. **Point of Contact:** [Ahlshia Shipley](#)

Coalition of Organizations for Disaster (CODE)

CODE, federal and nongovernment organizations that plan for disaster preparedness awareness and education, ensures consistent, accurate, and timely information to the public. This practice enables audiences to hear the same message even if it comes from different sources. Reinforcing the message helps people determine the steps they need to take to be better prepared. **Point of Contact:** [Beverly Samuel](#)



Healthy Homes Work Group

DFCS staff supported the Healthy Homes Work Group as it developed and executed [Advancing Healthy Housing: A Strategy for Action](#). This action plan includes goals of establishing and adopting national healthy housing recommendations and creating workforce development to address healthy hazards in housing. **Point of Contact:** [Beverly Samuel](#)

Federal Interagency Working Group for Child Abuse and Neglect (FEDIAWG)

FEDIAWG provides a forum for federal agencies to communicate and exchange ideas concerning child maltreatment-related programs, collect information about child maltreatment activities, and provide a basis for collective action. **Point of Contact:** [Ahlshia Shipley](#)

President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children (CEHTF)

The CEHTF is the focal point for federal government agencies to scope, plan, and take actions for the betterment of children's environmental health. This task force, comprised of 16 federal agencies, has a broad reach and is uniquely positioned to coordinate federal efforts to address the array of chemical, biological, and social stressors that threaten the health of children. **Points of Contact:** [Aida Balsano](#) and [Beverly Samuel](#)

Elizabeth Dole Foundation

Through the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, DFCS staff partnered with Easter Seals to provide webinars that serve the needs of rural and military caregivers. DFCS, along with various other agencies, identifies resources and gaps and creates tools to meet the needs of this audience. **Point of Contact:** [Sylvia Montgomery](#)

Financial Literacy and Education Commission

The Financial Literacy and Education Commission developed a national financial education web site, [MyMoney.gov](#), and a national strategy on financial education. As one of 19 agencies represented on the commission, DFCS represents NIFA to collaborate with other agencies and to promote financial literacy outreach through the Cooperative Extension System. **Point of Contact:** [Caroline Crocoll](#)

Grant Programs

[**AgrAbility - Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities Agriculture \(Extension\)**](#) increases the likelihood that farmers, ranchers, farm workers, and farm family members with disabilities will experience success in agricultural production. The program supports projects between the Cooperative Extension System and private non-profit disability organizations that work together to provide agricultural education and assistance. This supports farm operations for people with disabilities, and their families, who engage in farming and farm-related occupations. AgrAbility provided \$4,272,450 to fund 21 projects in FY15.



[**Extension Risk Management Education Partnerships \(ERME\)**](#) provides U.S. agricultural producers and their families with the knowledge, skills, and tools to make informed risk management decisions and enhance profitability. Projects funded in FY15 were: 1) North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center for \$1,082,736 to University of Nebraska; 2) Digital Center for Risk Management Education for \$355,968 to University of Minnesota; 3) Southern Risk Management Education Center at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service for \$1,082,736 to University of Arkansas; 4) Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Center for \$845,424 to University of Delaware; and 5) Western Extension Risk Management Education Center for \$1,082,736 to Washington State University.

Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative (FADI) supports the [**Extension Disaster Education Network \(EDEN\)**](#) through a cooperative agreement to Purdue University for the coordination of disaster education. EDEN's mission is to reduce the impact of disasters through science-based education. EDEN improves the nation's ability to mitigate, prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from disasters. EDEN received appropriately \$370,000 and provided sub awards to states so they could develop special initiatives to address food and agriculture defense, including agrosecurity, family preparedness, drought, and database management for emergency response.

[**Farm Business Management and Benchmarking Program \(FBMB\)**](#) provides funds to improve the farm management knowledge and skills of agricultural producers, and establish and maintain a national, publicly available farm financial management database to support improved farm management. FY15 projects that received funding were: 1) Expanding Farm Financial Database Collaboration and Research for \$414,470 to University of Minnesota; 2) Northern Plains Regional Farm Business Management and Benchmarking Partnership for \$464,849 to University of Nebraska; 3) Competitive Benchmarking: Assisting New York and Ohio Livestock and Crop Producers to Increase Profitability and Manage Risk in a Volatile Environment for \$181,638 to Cornell University; and 4) Midwest Farm Management and Benchmarking Collective Partnership for \$290,000 to University of Missouri.

[**Regional Rural Development Centers \(RRDCs\)**](#) receive NIFA funding, which is leveraged with many other sources several times over to offer a vast array of programs. FY15 projects that received funding were: 1) The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development for \$237,680 to Pennsylvania State University; 2) Southern Rural Development Center for \$237,680 to Mississippi State University; 3) Western Rural Development Center for \$237,680 to Utah State University; and 4) Northcentral Regional Center for Rural Development for \$237,680 to Michigan State University.



[**New Technologies for Ag Extension \(NTAE\) Program**](#) increases the capacity of the Cooperative Extension System (CES) to upgrade the technology needed to deliver science-based educational resources from land-grant and other partner institutions to the public. Applications were solicited for the NTAE to deliver state-of-the-art technology and software applications, high-quality leaders and staff, training for an exceptional CES workforce, legally binding contractual and financial instruments, and comprehensive evaluation, communications, and marketing activities. The project funded in FY15 was Extension: Catalyzing Innovation Through the Cooperative Extension for \$1,488,000 to Michigan State University.

[**Small Business Innovation Research \(SBIR\) Program**](#) provides federal funding to support technological innovation in the private sector. SBIR strengthens small businesses as they help meet federal research and development needs, helps small businesses bring their innovations to market, and promotes program participation of women-owned and economically disadvantaged small businesses. There are several topic areas within this program and DFCS provides leadership to the area of Rural Development. In FY15, seven awards in Rural Development were made for Phase 1, and two awards were made for Phase 2 of the program.

Grant Programs, Continued

Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grant Program (SLSNCGP) provides information and tools to improve decision making in handling natural and human-made disasters. Funding supports programs that focus on preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery from disasters. In FY15, projects funded were: 1) Preventing Outbreaks of Avian Influenza Science Through Timely Dissemination of Practical Science-Based Information for



\$225,000 to University of Maryland; 2) Enhancing and Extending Hail Damage and Recovery Information for Crops in Traditional and Social Media for \$41,000 to University of Nebraska-Lincoln; 3) Alaska Disaster Preparedness for \$19,173 to University of Alaska-Fairbanks; 4) Preparedness and Decision Making for Coastal Residents in Connecticut and Rhode Island; grant awarded to University of Connecticut for \$119,193; 5) Preparing the Rural Poor for Disaster for \$14,438 to Auburn University (Planning Grant); 6) Disaster Recovery Log Phone App for \$17,800 to South Dakota State University; and 7) The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Disasters Preparedness Demonstration Project for \$23,873 to University of Michigan.

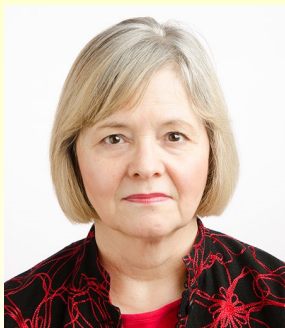
Rural Health and Safety Education (RHSE) Competitive Grants Program supports health education projects that provide individuals and families in rural areas with one or more of the following: a) Information as to the value of good health at any age; b) Information to increase individual or family motivation to take more responsibility for their own health; c) Information regarding rural environmental health issues; d) Information about and access to health promotional and educational activities; and e) Training for volunteers and health services providers concerning health promotion and health care services for individuals and families in cooperation with state, local, and community partners. FY15 projects that received funding were: 1) Addressing Cancer Health Disparities in Rural Wisconsin Through Education and Building Community Capacity for Action for \$350,000 to University of Wisconsin; 2) A Community Approach to Care Education: Empowering Rural Hospitals and Caregivers to Engage in Exceptional Care of Rural Elders for \$311,602 to Oklahoma State University; 3) Health Literacy and Emergency Preparedness Programs for Medicaid Recipients in Rural Arkansas for \$162,364 to University of Arkansas; 4) Increasing Diabetes Education in Rural Pennsylvania for \$295,562 to Pennsylvania State University; and 5) Balanced Living with Diabetes: Impacting Rural Community Health Through Evidence-Based Program Implementation by Cooperative Extension for \$315,747 to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification (YFSEC) responds to the need for alignment between youth vocational agricultural program curricula and youth agricultural safety and health standards. Over the past three years, NIFA's efforts in this area have focused on supporting development of a unified approach to a national farm safety education and curricula-certification program for youth. To date, these efforts have resulted in (a) development of the Safety in Agriculture for Youth (SAY) National Clearinghouse, which consists of two types of educational products: formal youth farm safety curricula and other supporting resources, all indexed based on their alignment to Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Career Cluster Content Standards (see www.extension.org/say); (b) an online training course for entry level youth workers and employers; (c) a risk assessment protocol for teachers, students, employers, or parents to apply when planning supervised agriculture experiences and (d) an interactive 3-D farm safety learning activity for youth ages 13-15. In FY 2015, approximately \$300,000 was available to support the SAY project efforts.



Staff Highlights



DFCS welcomes new National Program Leader [Beth Walter Honadle](#). Honadle will advance the DFCS Rural Sociology portfolio. Immediately prior to coming to USDA, she was director of the Program Monitoring and Research Division in the Office of Policy Development and Research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, DC. Her earlier federal service includes being an economist in the Economic Development Division of the Economic Research Service at USDA, national program leader for Economic Development, and state program leader for community and economic development and state specialist for the Minnesota Extension Service. She has been a professor of applied economics at the University of Minnesota; director of the Center for Policy Analysis & Public Service and professor of political science at Bowling Green State University; and director of the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. In her academic career she was principal investigator on several federally-funded research projects, including an evaluation of the Stronger

Economies Together (SET) Initiative for the USDA—Rural Development. She has authored or co-authored three books; published more than 30 journal articles, a dozen book chapters, and numerous papers and reports.

Susan Shockey retired on January 3, 2016. During her tenure, she provided national leadership for the Family and Consumer Economics program. Shockey promoted partnerships within the Land-Grant University System and with other multi-state partners to foster the three dimensions of financial capability: 1) Financial Knowledge and Understanding, 2) Financial Skills and Competence, and 3) Financial Responsibility. She integrated research, education, and extension methods to further enhance Family and Consumer Economics. She served on the Financial Literacy Education Commission and engaged in leadership that benefitted the nation around financial literacy. She managed critical grants in her portfolio, including multi-state projects, Farm Business Management and Benchmarking Program, Extension Risk Management Education Partnerships, Federal Employees Retirement System, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service Retirement grants, and capacity grant funded projects. Shockey served as president of Association of Family & Consumer Sciences while at NIFA, and she led many national initiatives that benefit families.



Visiting Scholars

ABOUT SCHOLAR SUCCESS



DFCS' Visiting Scholars Program advances collaboration between NIFA and our land-grant university partners. The program provides an opportunity for faculty and administrators to enhance their growth while working with federal-level colleagues. In FY15, DFCS hosted three visiting scholars: Virginie Zoumenou representing University of Maryland – Eastern Shore, Virginia Morgan White (Visiting Scholar 2012), representing Auburn University continued work, and Keith Tidball (Visiting Scholar 2014) representing Cornell University also continued his work.

Virginie Zoumenou (left), working with DFCS Director Caroline Crocoll, conducted extensive research and provided an assessment of the land-grant universities Family & Consumer Sciences International Projects. Zoumenou's project supports DFCS efforts to capture international Family & Consumer Sciences by exploring potential and existing international relationships. The review of these relationships can lead the way to new opportunities to improve Family & Consumer Sciences programs at state, national, and international levels.

Interagency Agreements

Housing and Urban Development, Department of Defense, Air Force, Army, Navy, Coast Guard, and the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration

NIFA DFCS has interagency agreements with the agencies listed above. These interagency agreements enable programs, educational activities, training, and other critical services for individuals and families in cooperation with state, local and community partners. **Points of Contact:** [Brent Elrod](#), [Beverly Samuel](#), and [Ahlishia Shipley](#).

Military Families

DFCS continued the work of the USDA-Department of Defense Partnership for Military Families, which officially began in 2010. This partnership cultivates collaborations with educational institutions, non-governmental and community-based organizations, and other organizations with expertise in early childhood education, youth development, and related fields. Together, these partnerships support the family programs, workforce development, and child care and youth development expansion needs of the Department of Defense (DoD). We also continued partnerships with the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, and the Department of Defense Education Activity. **Point of Contact:** [Ahlishia Shipley](#).

With the military families portfolio, DFCS awarded 14 projects in Fiscal Year 2015, which included three new competitive projects.



Master Family & Consumer Sciences Volunteer Program

Master volunteer programs are not new to the Cooperative Extension System. The Master Gardener Program, first offered in 1972, is perhaps the most familiar master volunteer effort that is offered nationally through Cooperative Extension. The [Master Family & Consumer Sciences Volunteer Program](#) is a national volunteer training and involvement initiative that focuses specifically on core areas of Extension Family & Consumer Sciences. A major feature of the Master Family & Consumer Sciences Volunteer Program is the examples of successful Family & Consumer Sciences-related volunteer programs throughout the country.

This initiative provides core training that increases the capacity of extension volunteers to help people make informed decisions, enhance their quality of life, and meet unique challenges that affect their families, farms, communities, and the economy. The involvement of volunteers helps the paid staff of Cooperative Extension better accomplish their educational mission. Volunteers complete a comprehensive training before conducting outreach. This core training helps volunteers become more effective and can be completed in approximately 8-10 hours through online or group training. The program contains three modules that include 12 lessons related to Cooperative Extension, Leadership & Public Policy, and Marketing & Branding. The resources include: 1) PowerPoint slides with information and discussion points; 2) Engaging activities that stimulate interests in a range of topics related to Family & Consumer Sciences; 3) Web-site links for more information; and 4) Post-tests to assess volunteer learning of the content. Module are listed here:

- Module 1: [Cooperative Extension](#)
- Module 2: [Leadership and Public Policy](#)
- Module 3: [Marketing and Branding](#)



This volunteer training program was developed through a partnership of the NIFA Division of Family & Consumer Sciences and Montana State University Extension. For educator's access to the resources, <http://www.masterfcsvolunteerprogram.info/> or contact [Barbara Allen](#) at MSU, 406-994-3451.

Partnerships



Expanding the Outreach of the Extension Disaster Education Network

Internationalizing the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) supports the President's programs and priorities related to Energy and the Environment. NIFA's National Program Leader Beverly Samuel and two EDEN delegates/DFCS Visiting Scholars, Virginia Morgan White and Keith Tidball, provided technical assistance to the Philippines Agriculture Department's Agricultural Training Institute and Philippines' university partners to establish Philippines EDEN. They traveled to the Philippines, September 15-26, 2015, to advance this goal. This international collaboration will help reduce the impact of disasters through science-based education. An affiliate membership of U.S. EDEN is being explored, which can offer mutual benefits to the United States and the Philippines through reciprocal lessons learned about preparing for, preventing, mitigating, and responding to disasters. This initiative has implications for research, education, and extension in both countries. **Point of Contact:** [Beverly Samuel](#)



State Energy Extension Partnership (SEEP)

Several partners at the grassroots and regional level propelled to the federal level the need to promote collaboration between Cooperative Extension and State Energy Offices. As a result, a memorandum of understanding was developed for interagency collaboration between the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and U.S. Department of Agriculture's Research, Education, and Economics and Rural Development mission areas to provide joint programs that transform the way individuals, communities, businesses, and governments use energy. This partnership will facilitate a nationwide state and community-based education and outreach program to accelerate adoption of energy efficiency and renewable energy in the United States. SEEP, which is seeking to expand representation, was formally created with representation from an array of partners. SEEP continued in 2015 to work on exploring funding opportunities around energy efficiency. **Point of Contact:** [Beverly Samuel](#)

Healthy Homes Interagency Partnership

The purpose of the Healthy Homes Partnership (HHP) is to link resources of NIFA and the land-grant universities with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes for a public outreach education program that will reduce housing deficiencies and risks associated with childhood diseases and injuries. HHP fosters work through NIFA with the land-grant universities in the Cooperative Extension System to assist with implementation of federal interagency priorities for "[Advancing Healthy Housing – A Strategy for Action](#)" by specific contributions of NIFA through Extension to support: Goal 4: Educate the Public About Healthy Homes. NIFA led the competitive process for selecting the HHP national coordinator. Led by University of Missouri's Michael Goldschmidt, the project is active in eight states (Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Tennessee), and has resulted in various strategies to promote healthy homes. Funding of \$225,000 was provided by an Interagency Agreement from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development to NIFA to support advancing the strategy for action. Go to <http://extensionhealthyhomes.org/> to learn more about Healthy Homes. **Point of Contact:** [Beverly Samuel](#)

Award Recognition of Partners

EDEN Project Director Recognized

Steve Cain of Purdue University was recognized for outstanding leadership as the project director for the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN). He executed the cooperative agreement from NIFA for the Food & Agriculture Defense Initiative funding. He successfully administered subawards to multiple land-grant universities that enable EDEN to function effectively as a national network to reduce the impact of disasters through research-based education. Beverly Samuel presented the award on behalf of NIFA at the EDEN Conference in Las Cruces, NM, October 7-9, 2015. She commended Cain for his exemplary leadership in connecting to national level organizations for collaboration with EDEN.

Stronger Economics Together Team Honored by NIFA

The Southern Rural Development Center led the Stronger Economics Together team, which was honored by NIFA at its Annual Day of Appreciation as recipients of the NIFA Partnership Award for Multi-State Efforts. The partnership includes the four Regional Rural Development Centers, USDA Rural Development, Purdue Center for Rural Development, and a host of land-grant university partners.



Left to Right: Brent Elrod, Lionel (Bo) Beaulieu, Rachel Welborn, Dave Sears, and Suzette Agans



Left to Right: Sandra Bailey, Denise Wooley, and Beverly Samuel

NIFA's DFCS was in the spotlight at the **National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences Conference**:

The inaugural [Master Family & Consumer Sciences Volunteer Program Award](#) was presented by NIFA to an extension educator for exemplary leadership in program implementation.

In photo on the left, **Denise Wooley of Kentucky Cooperative Extension** received a plaque from **Beverly Samuel, NIFA National Program Leader** and **Sandra Bailey, professor and family life specialist from Montana State University (MSU)**. Denise also received a \$300 monetary award from MSU.

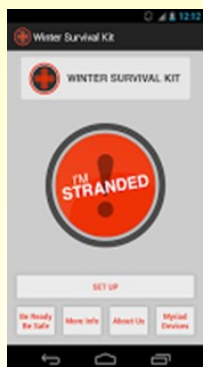
In the photo on the right, **NIFA National Program Leader Susan Shockey, Barbara O'Neill of Rutgers University**, and a team from Rutgers University were recognized for outstanding leadership for the [Small Steps to Health and Wealth Program](#). Small Steps to Health and Wealth is recognized as a NIFA Division of Family & Consumer Sciences Signature Program. The conference, which was a forum for presenting research and showcasing excellence in extension programs, was held at the historic Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, WV, November 2-6, 2015.



Left to Right: Susan Shockey and Barbara O'Neill

Michael Goldschmidt of University of Missouri received an award for outstanding leadership of the Healthy Homes Partnership at the Housing Education and Research Association Conference in Springfield, IL, October 11-14, 2015. He served as the national coordinator for the Healthy Homes Partnership and coordinated subawards to eight states. Additionally, he provided support nationally as a resource connecting these state projects to the Healthy Homes Partnership at the federal level. He transitioned the Healthy Homes project effectively from Auburn University upon the retirement of the former coordinator. He has visited each state in the project to assure goals and objectives are on target. NIFA National Program Leader Beverly Samuel presented this award on behalf of NIFA. She commended Goldschmidt for exceptional work and leadership of this important initiative.

Program Highlights



NIFA-funded Winter Storm App through Smith-Lever Grant

North Dakota State University's (NDSU) Winter Survival Kit was highlighted in the news during the Blizzard of January 2016. It was funded through the NIFA Special Needs Grant with NDSU matching funds. The free Winter Survival Kit app is available for iPhones and Android smartphones. If stranded, stuck in a snowbank or a ditch, the app helps users find their location, call 911, notify friends and family, and estimate how long they can run their vehicle to keep warm before running out of fuel. The app also alerts the user every 30 minutes as a reminder to turn off the vehicle's engine and check the exhaust pipe for snow buildup to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. The Winter Survival Kit phone app has received rave reviews, <http://video.foxnews.com/v/4716621688001>. NDSU's Becky Koch is the project director and [Beverly Samuel](#) is the DFCS point of contact for the Smith-Lever Special Needs Grants.

Smith-Lever Grant Funds Avian Influenza Education

University of Maryland received a Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grant for an educational project on avian influenza. Three biosecurity videos have already been released, which were so timely with the recent outbreak of avian influenza.

[Backyard Poultry Producers](#)

[Commercial Poultry Farms](#)

[Technical Service Personnel](#)

Nathaniel Tablante of University of Maryland is the project director and [Beverly Samuel](#) is the DFCS point of contact.

Just in time tips that help bring out the best in America's parents

By [Scott Elliott](#), NIFA Communications Staff

Moms and dads seemingly do it all: teacher, psychologist, nurse, defense attorney (or prosecutor, depending upon whose hand was in the cookie jar), coach, cook, etc. How they manage it all is a question for the ages, considering children don't come with a set of instructions. Despite that, they are not without resources.

North Carolina A&T State University (NC A&T) is home to one of these NIFA-supported programs, where extension educators are using Evans-Allen funds to mentor teen mothers on well-being and nutrition education. NC A&T also received a \$250,000 NIFA grant to develop new ways of using technology to deliver parenting information. The new format delivers material traditionally taught in classrooms and allows statewide training for extension educators.

Mississippi State University hosts a unique program, "[eBaby4U](#) ([link is external](#))." With the help of a \$158,000 NIFA grant, Project Director Kathleen Ragsdale is among the first — if not the first — to use social media to bring accurate, culturally-relevant information to low-income, first-time teen/young mothers.

"There are a handful of posts that discuss issues affecting pregnant and parenting teens; however, a number of these posts aren't written in a 'voice' to capture a teen's attention," Ragsdale said. "I decided to adapt content from [eXtension](#) ([link is external](#)) into nine videos and a website that would be culturally relevant for minority teen moms."

So far, so good, Ragsdale reports. "We've received positive anecdotal feedback that people like the site," she said. "When people see the site and view the videos they get as excited about eBaby4U as I am — so this means that our team has produced something that resonates with other folks, from teen moms to public health promotion experts."

The eBaby4U project is doing so well, in fact, that a sister project has sprung up. Ragsdale is teaming up with Melanie Loehwing of Mississippi State's Department of Communication to create a service-learning project called the "eBaby4U Sustainability Project" to develop a social media campaign to sustain eBaby4U.

For more information, visit <http://nifa.usda.gov/>.



Program Highlights, Continued

By all markers, FY15 was a banner year. The four [Regional Rural Development Centers](#) (RRDC) have well-established and respected programs that provide federal entities with access to the capacity of the Land-Grant University System. By aligning regional approaches that advance shared mission interests, national impact and public value are more readily and efficiently achieved. Throughout the past year, the RRDCs continued linkages with NIFA and USDA-Rural Development, NIFA and HHS' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – for innovative change in such priority need areas as new economic development strategies ([Stronger Economies Together](#)) and solutions to community behavioral health concerns ([Community Assessment and Education to Promote Behavioral Health Planning and Evaluation-CAPE](#)). CAPE was recognized with the National Rural Alcohol and Drug Abuse Network *Award of Excellence for Responsiveness to Rural Issues and Concerns* while Stronger Economies Together was recognized with NIFA's *Partnership Award for Multistate Efforts*.



The RRDCs also launched the **Asian American Pacific Islander Resource Center** with the [Hmong Language Media Resource](#). Further, the RRDCs worked with scientists and extension faculty to develop frontline thinking and planning around emergent priorities such as climate variability, disaster preparedness, persistent poverty, and local and regional food systems. After successfully training potential applicants to the Agriculture Marketing Services (AMS) [Farmers Market and Local Foods Promotion Program](#), AMS engaged NIFA and the RRDCs to help coordinate the mapping of local food resources in selected pilot states, across the Southern and Western regions in 2016. **Point of Contact:** [Brent Elrod](#).

DFCS provides liaison support to the [National Urban Extension Leaders Network \(NUEL\)](#). In December 2015, the Extension Committee on Organization & Policy approved a National Urban Extension Framework developed by NUEL leadership. The framework enabled coordination of national efforts to elevate opportunities and successes for extension in urban areas with regard to effective program delivery, resource development, professional development,

DFCS promotes the **National Health Outreach Conference (formerly Priester Conference)**, which offers a participatory and collaborative space for organizations and agencies to join together to learn and work across systems locally, regionally, and nationally to address current and future health and wellness education, practices, and needs. The **Jeanne M. Priester Awards** are presented at each year's conference to honor extension programs that positively impact the health and wellness of people across the United States. The award focuses on leadership to expand extension's capacity to increase the number of Americans who are healthy at every stage of life. **The 2015 Priester Awards** included Dining with Diabetes Program, Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute, and Text2BHealthy Program. **NIFA Liaison:** [Ahlishia Shipley](#).

[National Executive Council of the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America \(FCCLA\)](#)

DFCS staff hosted a meeting with the FCCLA at NIFA on February 10, 2015. FCCLA is a national career and technical student organization that provides personal growth, leadership development, and career preparation opportunities for students in Family & Consumer Sciences education. FCCLA has more than 200,000 members and more than 5,500 chapters from 49 state associations, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The organization has involved more than 10 million youth since its founding in 1945. During their visit to NIFA, council members (ten youth from across the country) gave presentations about FCCLA and shared some of their current initiatives, especially in the areas of nutrition and health. **NIFA Liaison:** [Ahlishia Shipley](#).



Staff Recognitions

Division Director Caroline Crocoll received NIFA's 2015 A. J. Dye Award for Diversity. The award annually recognizes NIFA staff accomplishments in achieving positive organizational outcomes in support of diversity, pluralism, and related innovation in program design and implementation. The award acknowledges and celebrates efforts that go beyond meeting EEO/Affirmative Action Program requirements. Crocoll has provided leadership to NIFA in several capacities resulting in positive organizational outcomes in support of diversity. She was recognized for her outstanding leadership and commitment to ensure NIFA is among the best places to work and employees are treated fairly, and with dignity, and are provided equal opportunities for success.



NIFA Director Sonny Ramaswamy presented the A.J. Dye Award to Caroline Crocoll



Beverly Samuel (middle) with NIFA Water for Agriculture Team

The Philippines Agricultural Technical Institute of the Philippines Department of Agriculture recognized **NIFA National Program Leader Beverly Samuel**, along with Keith Tidball of Cornell University and Virginia Morgan of Auburn University, for their contribution to providing technical support in development of the Philippines Extension Disaster Education Network. Beverly was also honored with a *NIFA Team Award for establishing strategic direction and developing an integrated and interdisciplinary science program aimed at solving the nation's most recent pressing water challenges*. These efforts resulted in the development of the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative-Water for Agriculture Challenge Area RFA.

Harold E. Hughes Award of Excellence

NIFA National Program Leader Brent Elrod and Scott Loveridge, director of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, were honored with the Harold E. Hughes Award of Excellence for Responsiveness to Rural Issues and Concerns for developing and administering the Community Assessment and Education to Promote Behavioral Health Planning and Evaluation (CAPE). CAPE is a partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Cooperative Extension.



Brent Elrod (Left) and Scott Loveridge (Right) displayed their plaques for the Harold E. Hughes Award.

NIFA National Program Leader Alishia Shipley was interviewed for an National Public Radio story that focused on urban farming, titled "[Urban Farmers Say It's Time They Got Their Own Research Farms](#)." The article focused on the role and impact of our only truly urban land-grant institution, the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). A long-standing educational provider for DC Metro residents, UDC also makes major contributions to the food system in the area, especially in disadvantaged areas. As the NIFA liaison to the [National Urban Extension Leaders](#) network, Shipley highlighted the breadth of UDC's work and what they have to offer to the urban community.



Alishia Shipley (right) recognized with the Student Volunteer-for-Credit Team.

Ahlishia Shipley and Shaniqua Briggs-Dubose received a NIFA Team Award for their efforts to support NIFA Strategic Goal 2: "Transform NIFA into a model agency with a highly motivated workforce." The team worked to develop and implement the Student Volunteer-for-Credit Program as a component of the agency's student internship program. The purpose of the working group team was to formalize and enhance the NIFA internship program. The student internship program provides leadership and experiential learning for undergraduate and graduate students with NIFA and strengthens their experience in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. The long-term benefits of the program are expanding the potential applicants for federal careers as well as fueling the pipeline for the agricultural workforce. The program includes a volunteer component and a professional development series for all interns.

Major Speaking Engagements

NIFA National Program Leader Aida Balsano represented NIFA's programs in the area of health and safety education at the February 2015 annual meeting of the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA) in Washington, DC. The meeting was attended by nearly 30 ASHCA leaders and federal agency representatives. Attendees discussed ongoing and emerging occupational safety and health issues affecting U.S. agriculture. For more information, see <http://www.agprofessional.com/news/ag-industry-feds-meet-ashca-safety-roundtable>.

Balsano also presented on funding opportunities in the areas of rural health and safety education at the March 2015 Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program Conference in Arlington, VA.

She presented and facilitated sessions at the April 13-16, 2015, AgrAbility National Training Workshop in Rochester, NY. For more information, visit <http://workshop.agrability.org/2015/>.

Additionally, Balsano facilitated a workshop for members of the Board on Human Sciences on developing effective impact statements. The workshop was held in November 14, 2015 in Indianapolis, IN, in conjunction with the Fall 2015 Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities meeting.

NIFA National Program Leader Beverly Samuel's keynote National Extension Energy Conference address, "The Power of Extension: Energy Efficiency Education" was a commendation and call to action for more than 100 Extension educators, and others in the energy industry at a 3-day conference in Seattle, WA, April 7-9, 2015. She discussed the critical role that extension engagement plays in energy education and how expanding stakeholder input can inform public policy, funding opportunities, and enable connections federally, regionally, state-wide, and locally. The energy educators have formally developed the National Extension Energy Initiative to further this work and continue an extension conference for energy educators.



Beverly Samuel presented at National Extension Energy Conference.

NIFA National Program Leader Ahlshia Shipley presented in a workshop at the 2015 Second Chance Act Conference, hosted by the U.S. Department of Justice. The theme for the conference was "Collaboration in Action: Practical Strategies to Deliver Results." The workshop title was "Empowering Families in the Re-entry Process through Research, Education and Outreach." Her presentation focused on the capacity of the Land-Grant University System and the Cooperative Extension System to partner in re-entry efforts of incarcerated inmates focused on family support.

She presented to 15 North Central National Extension Leadership Development Program participants visiting NIFA on federal work culture, NIFA mission and functions, how we accomplish our work, and the Family and Community Health program area. The event resulted in increased awareness of NIFA goals and connections to partners in the system.

Shipley also presented as a part of a webinar hosted by the Dibble Institute, a national non-profit that promotes relationship training for youth, especially in the context of dating and romantic connections. The title of the webinar was "Relationship Education Outreach in 4-H and Extension Programs."

NIFA Program Specialist Sylvia Montgomery represented NIFA at special convening of leaders of the National Coalition for Military and Veteran Caregivers (sponsored by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation), which led to her serving on the training and education council of the 2015 Hidden Heroes Impact Forum. Sylvia also coordinated with Easter Seals to present a webinar to rural military caregivers that provided an opportunity for them to learn more about Cooperative Extension System community-based programs. She also coordinated with USDA's Office of Personnel Management/Employee Assistance Program and University of Wyoming to present a multi-state research project on Elder Abuse.

Staff presented programmatic leadership areas of the DFCS portfolio at the Public Issues Leadership Development meeting, to extension and volunteer stakeholders, as well as at the National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences Conference to State Program Leaders and workshops on Family Well-Being and Community Vitality to extension educators.

DFCS Leadership At NIFA



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

Lean Six Sigma

"**Lean Six Sigma** is a methodology that relies on a collaborative team effort to improve performance by systematically removing waste; combining [lean manufacturing/lean enterprise](#) and [Six Sigma](#) to eliminate the eight kinds of waste: Time, Inventory, Motion, Waiting, Over production, Over processing, Defects, and Skills (abbreviated as 'TIMWOODS')," as defined by Wikipedia. Two staff members from DFCS, Brent Elrod and Beverly Samuel, completed the Lean Six Sigma Green Belt training and provided leadership for reviewing NIFA processes to eliminate waste. These efforts resulted in increased efficiencies at NIFA, resulting in benefits to our partners. They will both receive Green Belt Certification, which is an internationally recognized credential.

DFCS Staff Co-led the Streamlining the Grant Award Process. Why is this process important to you? This NIFA Continuous Process Improvement Team analyzed processing tasks and activities from the time a program's panel recommendations are approved until the awards are submitted to NIFA's Award Management Division. This streamlined process is being phased into practice in FY 2016 for competitive awards. This impacts grant recipients because the process time for competitive awards has been streamlined with improved efficiencies, which should lead to grant awardees receiving their funding sooner. **Co-Leader:** [Beverly Samuel](#).



Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (D&I WG) promotes a high-performing workforce by cultivating a diverse and inclusive work environment that ensures equal opportunity and inclusion where the uniqueness, background, and experience of every employee are valued and respected

at all levels within NIFA. D&I WG supported NIFA's commitment to improving USDA's record of civil rights and NIFA's Strategic Goal #2 ("People Goal" Transform NIFA into a model agency with highly motivated workforce). D&IWG sponsored a number of special emphasis events: Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Disability Employment Awareness Month, Veterans Day Observance, American Indian-Alaska Native Heritage Month Observance, Holocaust Remembrance, Asian Pacific American Islander Heritage Month, LGBT Pride Month, and Caribbean-American Heritage Month. Members of the D&IWG organized and led additional events and activities, such as staff leadership training opportunities, mini film and radio series, and international potlucks. **Co-Chair:** [Aida Balsano](#).

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